

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 01583 101426Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00
NEA-10 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 DODE-00 /092 W
-----101430Z 124971 /42

P R 101335Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9218
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1583

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, EX
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT OF NIGER
KOUNTCHE

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR YOUNG MET LATE FEBRUARY 8 WITH PRESIDENT OF NIGER SAYNI KOUNTCHE. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S REQUEST FOR KOUNTCHE'S VIEWS ON THE U.S. ROLE IN AFRICA, THE PRESIDENT SAID THE SITUATION ON THE CONTINENT WAS ALARMING AND "DISQUIETING." AMONG THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA, HE LISTED THE SAHARA, THE HORN, RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. KOUNTCHE SAID AFRICA EXPECTS THE U.S. TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO HELP AFRICANS SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS. MOREOVER, AFRICA LOOKS TO THE U.S. FOR SUPPORT OF ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE, 10 PM, FEBRUARY 8 IN KADUNA, AMBASSADOR YOUNG ASKED HIM FOR HIS VIEWS OF THE ROLE THE U.S. MIGHT PLAY IN AFRICA. (ALSO PRESENT WERE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO NIGER, CHARLES A. JAMES, AND DENNIS KEOGH WHO SERVED AS INTERPRETER.) KOUNTCHE SAID THAT HE SAW SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA WHICH HE FOUND EXTREMELY DISQUIETING. HE SAID
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 01583 101426Z

THEY INCLUDED THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM, THE HORN, RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

3. TURNING TO THE RHODESIA QUESTION, KOUNTCHE SAID THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM IS HOW TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE VARIOUS NATIONALIST GROUPS. THIS MUST BE SETTLED SOMEHOW. KOUNTCHE THOUGHT THAT PRESSURE FROM THE U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE COULD

TOPPLE THE SMITH REGIME RAPIDLY BECAUSE RHODESIA DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BE TRULY ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT.

4. KOUNTCHE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MAJOR WESTERN INTERVENTION WOULD BE REQUIRED IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE DID THINK THAT THE PROBLEM PROBABLY CAN BE RESOLVED BY ITSELF, BUT WITH SOME PRESSURE FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CAPE WAS OF GREAT STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE WESTERN WORLD, AND HE AGREED THAT THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.

5. THE PROBLEM IN THE HORN OF AFRICA KOUNTCHE SAID CONCERNED ETHIOPIA AND DJIBOUTI. ETHIOPIA IS CONCERNED THAT ONCE DJIBOUTI GAINS INDEPENDENCE IT WILL LOSE ITS STRATEGIC CORRIDOR TO THE SEA. SOMALIA WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO AVOID INVOLVING ITSELF IN DJIBOUTI AFTER THE FRENCH LEAVE. THE PROBLEM WAS EXACERBATED BECAUSE ERITREA, WHICH IS STRUGGLING FOR INDEPENDENCE SUPPORTED BY ARAB COUNTRIES, BLOCKS ETHIOPIA'S OTHER ROUTE TO THE SEA. ETHIOPIA IS UNLIKELY TO AGREE TO INDEPENDENCE FOR ERITREA.

6. ON THE WESTERN SAHARA, KOUNTCHE SAID THE PEOPLE OF SAHARA COULD FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTION, BUT THE HISTORICAL CONFLICTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN WERE SPILLING OVER INTO THAT TERRITORY. EVEN THE CANARY ISLANDS WERE BECOMING INVOLVED IN MEDITERRANEAN RIVALRIES. BEYOND ALL OF THESE TERRITORIES WAS THE REAL STAKE IN THE GAME: NIGERIA. SEVERAL MAJOR POWERS HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE PATH NIGERIA TAKES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 01583 101426Z

7. KOUNTCHE SAID AFRICA EXPECTS THAT THE U.S. WILL BECOME INTERESTED IN THE CONTINENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF AFRICA. THE U.S. SHOULD NOT REGARD AFRICA AS A PRIVATE HUNTING GROUND NOT TO BE DISTURBED. IF THE WEST DOESN'T INTEREST ITSELF, THE USSR OR CHINA WILL BECOME MORE INVOLVED AND MORE INFLUENTIAL HERE. NIGER WAS GRATEFUL FOR U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN THE PAST. IT WAS NOT ENOUGH, HOWEVER, TO ASSIST IN ONLY TIME OF CRISIS. THE U.S. SHOULD HELP AFRICA TO DEVELOP ITSELF. FINALLY KOUNTCHE SAID THAT AFRICANS HOPE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL CONSULT CLOSER WITH THEM SO THAT AFRICA WILL NOT FEEL CUT OFF FROM THE WEST. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BUT FIRMLY HELD POSITIONS ON WORLD ISSUES, AND GIVE ITS MORAL SUPPORT TO AFRICAN CAUSES.

8. AMBASSADOR YOUNG RESPONDED THAT HE HAD TALKED TO 20 AFRICAN LEADERS IN THE PAST TEN DAYS, BUT KOUNTCHE HAD MENTIONED SOME NEW PROBLEMS, FOR WHICH YOUNG WAS VERY GRATEFUL. ON THIS TRIP, HE HAD BEEN FOCUSING PRINCIPALLY ON SOUTHERN AFRICA BUT KOUNTCHE HAD HELPED HIM TO UNDERSTAND

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF ALL AFRICAN PROBLEMS. YOUNG
PROMISED TO REPORT ON KOUNTCHE'S VIEWS TO PRESIDENT CARTER.
HE SAID HE WOULD STAY IN CONTACT WITH NIGER
THROUGH THE NIGER AMBASSADOR IN THE U.S. AND AMBASSADOR
JAMES, ONE OF OUR BEST REPRESENTATIVES IN AFRICA.
EASUM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAGOS01583
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770048-0110
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770255/aaaabwhn.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fd5674c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3356125
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT OF NIGER KOUNTCHE
TAGS: PFOR, US, NG, (YOUNG, ANDREW), (KOUNTCHE, SEYNI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fd5674c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009